



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

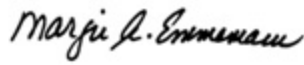
Governor Janet Napolitano led an Arizona delegation to the 25th Annual Border Governor's Conference (BGC) in Puerto Peñasco (Rocky Point), Sonora, which took place September 26 - 28. AOT was honored to join the Governor and to be a part of this historic event. AOT's Deputy Director Kelly Paisley and Mexico Policy Advisor Laura French joined representatives from Texas, California, New Mexico, Baja California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas and Sonora at the Tourism Work Table of the conference to discuss critical border-state issues effecting tourism.

The tourism delegation had the opportunity to address three major tourism related issues including the exchange of best practices to develop and promote bi-national tourism activities and strengthen collaborative projects between neighboring border states; the discussion of the appropriate implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), which is the federal initiative that requires all travelers, including U.S. citizens to have a passport or other accepted document that establishes identity and citizenship to enter or re-enter the United States; and the development of plans to obtain cross border traveler data in addition to the Mexican Visitor Survey, which our office is already conducting. The Mexican Visitor Survey will be completed in July 2008 and will ultimately help us understand this important visitor segment in more detail by highlighting vital visitor trend information.

We would like to congratulate outgoing BGC chair Sonora's Governor Eduardo Bours for a productive and memorable Border Governor's Conference. Next year's conference will be chaired by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in Los Angeles, CA.

For more information please visit www.azot.gov – Administration – Bi-national & Federal Projects. Please view the border region map on AOT's website - www.arizonaguide.com/Section.aspx?sid=70

Have a great week.



Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

AOT Participated in National Watchable Wildlife Conference

AOT was invited to participate in the National Watchable Wildlife Annual Conference in Tucson, Arizona. The conference, held October 3–6, was sponsored by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. More than 140 people attended the event including representatives from local Convention and Visitor Bureaus and Wildlife protection agencies. The conference featured breakout sessions on natural resource conservation and management, site development and management, wildlife and nature tourism. AOT presented information on what the agency is doing to help promote the growing Watchable Wildlife market in addition to sharing information on available grants to help rural tourism development. AOT also presented information pertaining to FAM tours and how these tours can help promote Watchable Wildlife destinations. For more information about the Watchable Wildlife organization, please visit www.watchablewildlife.org.

Trippin' with AOT

Great Response for AOT's LA Media Marketplace

AOT recently hosted the Los Angeles Media Marketplace at the Four Seasons Beverly Wilshire Hotel. This bi-annual event gave nearly two dozen tourism and hospitality partners from around the state the opportunity to expose their community of property to key members of the LA media. Those in attendance included representatives from *KABC*, *OK! Magazine* and *People Magazine*. This year's LA Media Marketplace also included a Native American component. The Native American programming included demonstration by Apache basketweaver Marilyn Hunsicker and a tasting of traditional foods made from blue corn meal.

Industry News

Congratulations to the Economic Engines of Arizona Award Winners!

The *Arizona Business Magazine* held its Second Annual Economic Engines of Arizona Awards October 2 at the Ritz Carlton Phoenix. Every year the magazine honors a variety of Arizona companies, people, places, and organization that exemplify the best of what drives the state's economy. Congratulations to the following organizations and people whose contribution help drive the state's economy: Scottsdale Arabian House Show, Desert Caballeros Western Museum, Flagstaff Convention and Visitors Bureau, Grand Canyon Skywalk/Hualapai Tribe, Sedona Chamber of Commerce, and to Mark Winkleman, Arizona State Land Commissioner. Combined, these winners directly employ thousands of people and indirectly provide work for tens of

thousands more. Their positive impact on the state's economy encompasses payrolls, taxes, infrastructure improvement, charitable contributions, quality-of-life enhancements and more.

Vacation Getting Shorter, But We Take More of Them

The Great American Vacation is just a memory for a growing number of working people who are increasingly forgoing one- and two-week annual travels for far shorter escapes. According to the Travel Industry Association, the average length of a vacation has dropped from about five days in the 1980s to four days in the '90s to less than 3.5 days now. At the same time, the number of annual vacations is rising, as people take shorter but more frequent trips. The trend is less pronounced in Central Florida, with its many diversions and a huge tourism industry that encourages longer stays. Still, travel experts say that as Americans' lifestyles continue changing, the region is wise to respond--and to court more overseas travelers, who continue to spend more time and money in the region than domestic visitors. Suzanne Cook, TIA's senior vice president of research, said the trend toward shorter trips is glacial but significant. It has altered the way Americans think of time off, turning what was once a long weekend into the typical vacation. (*Orlando Sentinel.com/Business*)

U.S. Weekly Hotel Room Revenue Rises 7.2 Percent

U.S. hotels posted a 7.2 percent increase in room revenue for the week ended Sept. 22 from a year earlier, Reuters reports Smith Travel Research said on Wednesday. Occupancy rose 0.1 percentage points to 67.3 percent, while room rates rose 7.1 percent to an average of \$105.89 a night, according to Smith Travel, which tracks lodging industry data. That boosted revenue per available room -- a combination of room rates and occupancy that is a benchmark of the industry's health -- by 7.2 percent to \$71.26.

Study: Student Travel Market Growing

A new survey shows the average spent by young people on a trip abroad is now \$2,600, a 39 percent rise since 2002. That's a rate of 8 percent, which is more than inflation and slightly higher than the growth in travel expenditures across the population, says the World Youth Student & Educational Travel Confederation (WYSE). "Overall, the global youth travel market will be worth US\$154 billion this year," the group says. The report, says TravelMole, which updates a WYSE study conducted five years ago, also shows young travelers are early adopters of new travel technology, with more than 80 percent now using the internet to search for information before departing on their trip, up from 70 percent in 2002. When asked what were the most valuable features of travel Web sites, respondents said the ability to compare prices and the availability of information about destinations, both of which were cited by over 80 percent. Less than 60 percent identified the ability to book their entire trip on the same website or the ability to save their enquiry on the site as valuable.

American Travelers Turning Green -- Up to a Point

More than half of all U.S. adults say they would be more likely to select an airline, rental car or hotel that uses more environmentally friendly products and processes, according to the results of the latest travelhorizons survey by the Travel Industry Association and Ypartnership. But only 14 percent of respondents said their actual selection of a travel service supplier would be influenced by that supplier's efforts to preserve and protect the environment. And just 13 percent would be willing to pay higher rates or fares to use suppliers who demonstrate environmental responsibility (although 56 percent said they might). The amount of the rate or fare premium appears to be the source of their hesitation: 76 percent would pay less than 10 percent more per usage, with the majority of respondents indicating they would pay less than 5 percent more. Details at 202-408-2183. (*Special to TA*)